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New JusticeCorps Program to be Launched Today at Alameda Superior Court

Students Help Courts Improve Access to Justice

Oakland—An innovative program will be launched today at the Superior Court of Alameda County that will utilize the talents and enthusiasm of college students to assist the growing numbers of Californians who cannot afford legal representation.

More than 40 Bay Area college students will join JusticeCorps at an inaugural celebration and swearing-in ceremony to be held from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. today, Friday, November 17, at the Rene C. Davidson Courthouse, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland.

California Supreme Court Justice Ming W. Chin will make a special appearance at the ceremony and address students, as he did two years ago when JusticeCorps was first piloted at the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.

“California is experiencing an explosion in the number of individuals appearing in court without legal representation in many legal matters, ranging from family law to housing issues,” said Administrative Director of the Courts William C. Vickrey. “JusticeCorps members will provide the court staff and legal aid attorneys working in Self-Help Centers much-needed assistance to meet the growing demand for services.”

With up to 100,000 self-represented litigants using the Bay Area courts each year, the new JusticeCorps members will enable self-help centers to offer more in-depth, individualized services to the public and help them process legal paperwork and prepare for cases.

The new Bay Area program will be staffed by the Superior Court of Alameda County in partnership with the trial courts of San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The students are enrolled at the

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University of California Berkeley, San Francisco State University, and California State University East Bay.

By joining JusticeCorps, students commit 300 hours during the academic year to serve in court self-help centers. Students will receive up to 50 hours in training on family law, small claims, and unlawful detainer cases and will be instructed on legal ethics, cultural sensitivity, and civic engagement.

The JusticeCorps project is a collaborative effort of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs, California State University Northridge, California State University Dominguez Hills, California State Polytechnic University Pomona, University of California Los Angeles, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Neighborhood Legal Services, and the Legal Aid Society of Orange County.

The JusticeCorps project is funded through a \$750,000, three-year AmeriCorps grant, supplemented with additional funds from the AOC. Developed by AOC and the Los Angeles superior court, the program is envisioned as a pilot for future replication throughout the state.

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